

To: Senator Doyle, Senator Kissel, Representative Tong, and distinguished members of the Joint Committee on Judiciary  
From: Francis J. Luongo  
RE: **Proposed House Bill 7285, An Act Concerning Complaints That Allege Misconduct By Law Enforcement Agency Personnel**

I have owned a home in the Greater Bridgeport area since the mid-nineteen-sixties. Over those many years, I have been impressed with the confidence, respect and trust that area communities have for law enforcement authorities. This is influenced in no small measure by the reciprocal regard that police departments have for members of their communities.

State law for several years has contributed to this healthy relationship with the provisions of section 7-294bb of the General Statutes, concerning the way law enforcement agencies receive and respond to complaints of alleged misconduct by law enforcement personnel. I am now writing to support proposed House Bill 7285 that would improve the acceptance, processing, and investigation of such complaints by creating uniform standards of practice for law enforcement agencies throughout the state to ensure compliance with the law.

Highlighting the compliance amendments to 7-294bb provided by HB7285 are the following: the imposing of penalties on law enforcement agencies not in compliance with state standards for dealing with complaints; the creating of a standardized complaint form in all commonly languages in the state; the requiring that law enforcement agencies track the administration and disposition of complaints with annual reports to the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management.

In my view, community-relations policing is the gold standard for law enforcement. It requires the development of partnerships between the public and the authorities on as wide a basis as possible. In my view, Bridgeport, Fairfield, Easton, Monroe and Trumbull in my area can and should be on the same page in this regard, and such regional compliance should be a statewide hallmark. HB7285 can help make it so.

You are probably aware of the news that the Los Angeles Police Department is reporting a sudden and sharp decline in the number of reports from immigrants about such crimes as sexual assault and domestic violence. The LAPD attributes the decline to the fear of falling into deportation custody. It is an example of a breakdown in the relationship between the police and the community.

The factors involved in such a breakdown will differ from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, but the LAPD experience is instructive for all jurisdictions. Law enforcement agencies everywhere need and rely on strong relationships with their communities, and HB7285 with its enhanced compliance provisions for the handling of complaints from the public would help solidify those relationships in Connecticut. I strongly urge members of the judiciary committee to support the measure.

Francis J. Luongo  
4 Crescent Drive  
Easton, CT 06612